

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency



Administrative Issuance: CFSA-16-004

TO: All Staff

FROM: Debra Porchia-Usher
Deputy Director for Community Partnerships

DATE: June 17, 2016

RE: Engagement of Kin and Extended Family when Parents/Caretakers of In-Home Cases Withhold Consent or Disengage Altogether

Parents/caregivers in open In-Home cases may refuse to give CFSA permission to engage extended family members in case planning or to explore them as potential placement options prior to an imminent home removal.

This Administrative Issuance provides guidance to CFSA social worker as to the circumstances under which it is appropriate to explore and engage kinship and extended family despite a parent's refusal to consent.

Circumstances under which Kin and Extended Family Members May be Explored and Engaged

In instances when one of the following programmatic criteria has been met, social workers need not obtain parental consent to locate and engage kin and extended family members for the purpose of identifying child service needs and resources to attend to those needs:

- 1) A child's removal from the home is pending or imminent;
- 2) An At-Risk Family Team Meeting (FTM) has been scheduled (in which case family members should be invited as appropriate);
- 3) CFSA scheduled a court date to community paper the case; or,
- 4) CFSA has a scheduled court date to revoke protective supervision.

Under these circumstances, the social worker may engage appropriate kin and extended family members in safety, goal, service, and placement planning. Social workers must be mindful that planning with kin and extended family members must not infringe in any way on a parent's right to custody or control over his or her child(ren.)

Legal Authority to Engage Kin and Extended Family without Parental Consent

Under certain circumstances, CFSA social workers are allowed to explore and engage kin and extended family members who may be appropriate participants on the child's case management team and/or willing and capable caretakers in the event of a home removal. The District of Columbia Code §4-1303.06(a)(2) that governs confidentiality of records and information for children and families involved in the child welfare system does provide legal authority for CFSA staff members to ask other family members or other persons about family resources for potential placement of children and youth found to be abused or neglected.

Questions about this issuance should be directed to the Deputy Director for Community Partnerships.

